

**The Farhat J. Ziadeh
Distinguished Lecture
in Arab and Islamic Studies
2005**



**Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization
University of Washington, Seattle**

Dear friends and colleagues;

We are very pleased to provide you with a copy of the 2005 Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lecture in Arab and Islamic Studies: "Resurrecting Empire: The End of Year II of the Occupation of Iraq," delivered by Prof. Rashid Khalidi of Columbia University on May 19, 2005.

The Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lectureship is dedicated to the promotion and celebration of excellence in the field of Arab and Islamic studies and was formally endowed in 2001. Farhat Ziadeh is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization at the University of Washington. Few scholars have been so definitive in their impact on generations of students and colleagues in the field of Arab and Islamic studies. Born in Ramallah, Palestine, in 1917, Professor Ziadeh received his B.A. from the American University of Beirut in 1937 and his LL.B from the University of London in 1940. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, London, and became a Barrister-at-Law in 1946. In the last years of the British Mandate, he served as a Magistrate for the Government of Palestine before eventually moving with his family to the United States. He was appointed Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Princeton where he taught until 1966, at which time he moved to the University of Washington. The Ziadeh Lectureship is a fitting tribute to his seminal contributions to the building of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Washington as well as his impact on the field nationally and internationally.

The Ziadeh Endowment and the advancement of Arab and Islamic Studies that it fosters are made possible by contributions from a host of colleagues, students, and friends, as well as the exemplary generosity and commitment of the Ziadeh family. To all of you who have been among these supporters, we want to extend once again our warmest thanks for your continuing participation in helping make this lectureship series possible.

You may also find an electronic copy of Professor Khalidi's lecture on our departmental web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/nelc/>, as well as other information about the Department and its programs and events, online newsletters, and contact information.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Williams
Chair, Near Eastern
Languages & Civilization
1997-2005

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization
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May 19, 2005

**RESURRECTING EMPIRE: THE END OF
YEAR II OF THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ**

Professor Rashid Khalidi
*Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies,
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Rashid Khalidi

Professor Rashid Khalidi received his B.A. in History from Yale University (1970) and his D. Phil. in Modern History from Oxford (1974), is currently the Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University, and Director of Columbia's Middle East Institute. His distinguished teaching career includes, among others, eight years on the faculty at American University of Beirut from 1976-85, and appointment at Columbia in the mid-1980's, and then from 1987 until his recent move to Columbia in 2003 he was in the Departments of History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilization at the University of Chicago, and was Director of their Middle East Center and Center for International Studies.

Professor Khalidi's long list of publications illustrates both the quantity and the richness of his intellectual contributions to the field. His books and co-edited volumes include: *British Policy towards Syria and Palestine 1906-1914: The Antecedents of the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreements and the Balfour Declaration* (St. Antony's College Middle East Monographs. London: Ithaca Press, 1980); *Palestine and the Gulf: Proceedings of an International Seminar*, co-edited with Camille Mansour (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1982); *Under Siege: P.L.O. Decision-making During the 1982 War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, co-edited with Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih and Reeva Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). One of his most well-known works is his prize-winning *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), which has now been translated into several languages. His latest book is another award-winning work: *Resurrecting Empire* (New York: Beacon, 2004), and is also already translated into French, Italian, Spanish and Arabic. His *curriculum vitae* lists over eighty articles on a wide variety of topics regarding Middle Eastern history and Arab studies, and an equally lengthy list of invited lectures and scholarly presentations at conferences.

Professor Khalidi's distinguished record of service and honors is far too extensive to catalog here. Examples of public service include Advisor for the Delegation to Madrid and Washington peace negotiations in 1991-1993; Member, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1999-; and President, American Committee on Jerusalem/American Task Force on Palestine, 1995-2004. He has been the recipient of many awards, including grants from the Ford, Fulbright, Rockefeller and Macarthur Foundations. Perhaps symbolic of many of the other recognitions of his outstanding professional accomplishments and contributions is that he was elected President of the Middle East Studies Association for 1993-94, the major national society in this field.

RESURRECTING EMPIRE: THE END OF YEAR II OF THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

Rashid Khalidi

The people of England have been led in Mesopotamia into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honor. They have been tricked into it by a steady withholding of information. The Baghdad communiqués are belated, insincere, incomplete. Things have been far worse than we have been told, our administration more bloody and inefficient than the public knows. It is a disgrace to our imperial record and may soon be too inflamed for any ordinary cure. We are today not far from a disaster.... Our unfortunate troops, Indian and British, under hard conditions of climate and supply are policing an immense area, paying dearly every day in lives for the willfully wrong policy of the civil administration in Baghdad... but the responsibility in this case is not on the army, which has acted only upon the request of the civil authorities.

T.E. Lawrence, *The Sunday Times*, August 1920

Let me begin this talk about U.S. policy in the Middle East seen against the historical background of Western interventions there, and of Middle Eastern perceptions about that intervention, with a brief digression, which I hope will be illustrative.

There is a small, dusty town along one of the bends of the Euphrates River, sticking out into the great Syrian Desert. It is located along a very old trade route which links the oasis towns of the Nejd province in the eastern part of what is today Saudi Arabia with the ancient cities of Aleppo and Mosul to the north. This small town is also on the desert highway from Baghdad to Amman. Since time immemorial, it has been a crossroads. For millennia, people have been going up and down that north-south desert highway, and stopping at this town at a crossing over the Euphrates River, which serves as a seaport on that great desert sea. It thus happens to be a place with links to people all over what are today Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Jordan: its population is linked by tribal connections, family or marriage to people in all these places or even farther afield. Some are parts of great tribal confederations like the Shammar, others are members of smaller tribes, while yet others have no tribal affiliations, but are intermarried with those who do.

Because it is a stopping point on this great desert highway which leads up from the Eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula to the heavily inhabited areas of the Fertile Crescent, the religious ideas that came out of Eastern Arabia in the late 18th century – the ideas of a man named Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab which today we call Wahhabism – took root in this little town well over 220 years ago, well before our Republic was born. In

other words, this town is a place where what we would today call fundamentalist salafi or Wahhabi ideas have been well implanted for something like 10 generations. It is a very religious, very austere, very ascetical place. As a result, it is commonly known in Iraq as the town of 1000 mosques.

This small town also happened to be part of the Dulaim district where, in the spring of 1920, before T. E. Lawrence wrote the passage I have just read you, the British military occupation authorities discerned dangerous levels of civil unrest. This unrest had first erupted some time before that in an even smaller crossroads town called Tal 'Afar, a little further up along the Euphrates to the north and west, as well as in the mainly Shi'a districts to the south.

After the incidents at Tal 'Afar and elsewhere, the British were willing to take no chances, given the delicacy of their situation in Iraq at that time. Their troops were thin on the ground in this vast country, and there was unease back home in Britain over the situation in Iraq. They chose to send to the troubled Dulaim district one of their most experienced colonial officers, Lt.-Col Gerald Leachman. Col. Leachman was a renowned explorer – he had been one of the first Europeans to cross the Arabian Peninsula from East to West, and one of the first to visit Riyadh, capital of the xenophobic Wahhabis. He was also a man with a fierce temper. Gertrude Bell said of him, "He was a wild soldier of fortune [who] always used unmeasured language to the Arabs." Another source says of him: "He was the bravest of men, but irresponsible. He was regarded as the most insubordinate of officers, and he attracted the worst elements of the Arab community whom he cursed roundly in his colorful dog-Arabic."

In the event, just a few months after his arrival, Col. Leachman got into a dispute with an important local leader named Shaykh Dhari just outside the small town I have been talking of. In circumstances that are disputed, Leachman was killed in an altercation with this Shaykh. His death opened the floodgates of unrest in Iraq, and became the spark for the nation-wide 1920 revolt against the British occupation involving both Sunnis and Shi'a that ended up costing over 10,000 Iraqi lives and the lives of more than 1,000 British and Indian troops. To bring Iraq back under their control, the British had to use massive air power, bombing the rebellious tribes indiscriminately. They did not have CNN or al-Jazeera to worry about in those days, nor was international humanitarian law then very well developed, and the descriptions by British officers of what they did do not make pretty reading. I will spare you their detailed accounts. Suffice it to say that it was in Iraq in the early 1920's that "Bomber Harris," later the head of the RAF's Bomber Command that razed many German cities and took hundreds of thousands of civilian lives during World War II, first made his reputation as a man who did not care about inflicting civilian casualties.

The town I have been talking of, which until recently was a small city of perhaps 300,000 people, is called Falujah. Shaykh Dhari's family still has great religious and national prestige in Iraq, and his grandson, Shaykh Harith al-Dhari, is today a prominent Iraqi cleric. In his capacity as spokesman of the Council of Sunni 'Ulema, he helped to negotiate the lifting of the first Marine siege of Faluja in April 2004, and he was prominent in protesting the Marine assault that destroyed large parts of the town and forced a

quarter of a million of its inhabitants to flee in November 2004. He was arrested a few days afterwards in Baghdad, and was subsequently released. He is still an important figure among Iraqi Sunnis.

My point in telling you this story is to suggest that the dusty desert town of Falujah, which has recently become a symbol for Iraqis and others of what the United States occupation of Iraq has done, sums up several interrelated tribal, religious, and nationalist aspects of Iraq's history. Long before U.S. troops set foot on Iraqi soil, it was considered by Iraqis to be a symbol of their resistance to foreign control. However we see these events now, we must understand that what has happened and is happening there and elsewhere in Iraq, (like Ramadi or Mosul or Tal 'Afar today) will necessarily be perceived by Iraqis in terms of their own history. In light of the January elections in Iraq, I could have told you another story, this one about the elections held there by the British in 1921, in which they exiled the most popular candidate, al-Sayyid Talib al-Naqib, to their colony of the Seychelles Islands, persuaded another to withdraw, and then managed to get their hand-picked candidate elected King of Iraq.

The result of these rigged elections was a brittle legitimacy for over three more decades of continued British control over Iraq, exercised through a nominally independent, nominally democratic government, but one whose sovereignty was severely limited, like that of the current Iraqi government. I would suggest further that these stories show that the United States is not creating the world anew in the Middle East. Our country is waging a war in a place where there is a lot of history, indeed five or six thousand years of history, more history than perhaps anywhere else on earth. This is a place where history really matters, and where how people understand their own history is very likely to determine how they see our intervention in their affairs.

As those of you who have been studying Middle East history know, the United States has only been a Middle Eastern power since 1933, when a group of U.S. oil companies that later formed the ARAMCO consortium signed an exploration deal with Saudi Arabia. The United States has been an important Middle East power since American troops first landed in North Africa and Iran in 1942, and has been the dominant power there for several decades. You may not know that there have been American troops stationed in some part of the Middle East for the entirety of the intervening 63 years since 1942. As my story about Faluja and the 1921 elections suggests, Americans have a great deal to learn about a region that we have dominated for so long, and about how their country's actions there may be perceived in light of this region's modern history.

However that may be, it is a fact that our image in the Middle East was until fairly recently quite different from what it has since become. The United States was once celebrated in the Middle East as a non-colonial, and at times an anti-colonial, power. America opposed colonial rule, and promoted self-determination, most notably in President Wilson's Fourteen Points in 1918. The United States was so popular at this stage that when the Paris Peace Conference after World War I sent out a commission of enquiry in 1919 to find out which foreign power the people of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine wanted as a League of Nations mandatory, an overwhelming majority of those asked said they wanted the United States to play this role.

After World War II and through the 1960's, the U.S. helped to get Soviet and British troops out of Iran, helped prevent these two powers from establishing a trusteeship over Libya, and supported a variety of Arab countries to remove hated foreign military bases from their soil, including Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria. Beyond this, the United States was renowned all over the Middle East for more than a century for its educational, medical and charity efforts. Americans established three of the finest universities in the region, Bogazici University in Istanbul, the American University in Beirut, and the American University in Cairo. For generations, therefore, people in the Middle East thought extremely well of America and Americans.

In recent decades, however, the United States has intervened more and more deeply in the internal affairs and regional conflicts of the Middle East, and its image in the region has changed for the worse in consequence. Over time, the United States came to support anti-democratic regimes because they provided access to oil and military bases. In some extremely important cases, such as that of Iran in 1953, the Eisenhower administration helped the hated former colonial power, Britain, to overthrow a constitutional, elected, popular government and install a pliable despot because this democratic government had nationalized a British oil company. The bitterness this intervention created ultimately expressed itself 25 years later in the Islamic revolution that overthrew the Shah. We are still suffering from Iranian hostility rooted in American involvement in this coup, and subsequent U.S. support for the despotic regime of the Shah for over a quarter of a century. While America's democratic ideals are widely admired in the Middle East, its steady support over many decades for a range of autocrats and feudal monarchs has created the sense that it is hypocritical in proclaiming these ideals but not living up to them in its policies there: put bluntly, we are seen as not practicing what we preach.

Today the United States has a serious problem in the Middle East. Irrespective of how Americans see themselves, the United States is increasingly perceived in this region as stepping into the boots of overbearing Western colonial occupiers who are still remembered bitterly from one end of the Middle East to the other, from Morocco to Iran. I would remind you that the colonial era in the Middle East is not ancient history. In the 1960's and into the early 1970's, Britain had military bases in different parts of the Arabian Peninsula, controlled local governments such as those of Qatar, Oman and the Trucial Coast (what later became the UAE), and its troops were fighting armed insurgencies in places like Aden and Dhofar. The French occupation of Algeria only ended in 1962. All over the region in the decades after World War II, there was a determined struggle against unequal treaties that enabled the colonial powers to maintain military bases on the soil of these countries against the will of their peoples. Whether Bizerte in Tunisia, the Canal Zone in Egypt, Habbaniyya in Iraq, or Aden in Yemen, these hated foreign military bases were the symbol of subjugation to the foreigner, and consequently became the focus of nationalist agitation, and often of armed resistance.

These events are part of the living memory of anyone in the Middle East in their 50's or older: this includes the entire elites of all the Arab countries and Iran. And their understanding of this recent colonial past has shaped the educational systems in which the young have learned their own national histories. They learn about determined resistance to foreign occupiers going back to the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798, the French invasion

of Algeria in 1830, the British invasion of Egypt in 1882, and other occupations until the third quarter of the 20th century. This history of theirs is like Bunker Hill and Valley Forge to us, with the difference that these events were going on until just a few decades ago.

Let me read you a few more quotes:

Oh ye Egyptians, they may say to you that I have not made an expedition hither for any other object than that of abolishing your religion... but tell the slanderers that I have not come to you except for the purpose of restoring your rights from the hands of the oppressors...

Napoleon Bonaparte, Alexandria, July 2, 1798.

Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators... It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth...

General F.S. Maude, Commander of British Forces, Baghdad, March 19, 1917.

Unlike many armies in the world, you came not to conquer, not to occupy, but to liberate, and the Iraqi people know this.

Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense, Baghdad, April 29, 2003.

I could have quoted the words of William Gladstone after the “temporary” occupation of Egypt in 1882, which lasted for 72 years, or General Allenby’s words when he entered Jerusalem in 1917, or those of General Gouraud when he entered Damascus in 1920. All proclaimed their lofty intentions. All established hated occupations that persisted for decades in the teeth of bitter popular resistance. My point is not that the intentions of any of these men were sincere or insincere. It is rather that in this part of the world it is not enough to proclaim good intentions: in the eyes of Iraqis and others in the Middle East it is actions, not intentions, which count. Most importantly, all of this is seen by them in light of their history, not ours. And their history tells them that in every previous case of Western intervention, what resulted was a lengthy unwanted occupation that sooner or later engendered resistance.

What people remember in this region are not just these statements, but what happened afterwards. A few months after his proclamation, Napoleon’s governor of Cairo was assassinated and his troops faced a popular rising there that they were only able to quell by massing artillery in the Citadel and bombarding the city. I have just mentioned to you the Iraqi revolt, only three years after General Maude’s statement. Another Iraqi revolt took place in 1941. The French had to fight their way into Damascus and bombarded the city three times between 1920 and 1945. What resulted in other words, in Middle Easterners’ understanding of their history, was not liberation or democracy, but occupation and subjugation.

And I would warn you that for Middle Easterners, it is not enough for a foreign power to say that it intends to withdraw: the British in Egypt made such claims for decades after they arrived in 1882, while further entrenching their military bases, which were only finally removed in 1954. The French did the same thing in North Africa, Syria and Lebanon. Both powers allowed quasi-independent governments to emerge, while keeping the reins of real power in their High Commissions and Embassies, exercised through advisors who had to be obeyed. The real decisions were made in London and Paris, not in Cairo, Tunis, Damascus and Baghdad. Iraqis today are aware that the United States is building a number of military facilities -- 14 to 16 by some accounts -- in out-of-the-way places, part of what the Pentagon calls a network of "enduring bases" that it intends will remain in Iraq long after nominal sovereignty is handed over to a government that will do exactly as it is told, just as the current government does. We shall see whether this plan succeeds, or whether the overwhelming desire of Iraqis to be free of foreign bases and foreign control is able to find expression, either through the ongoing insurgency, or through the newly elected parliament, or in some other fashion.

Let me shift my focus briefly before concluding. Middle Eastern economics is another area that is crucially important to understanding how American actions are perceived in the region. Americans may not be aware of it, but the wholesale theft of the property of the Iraqi people as it was "privatized" was prominently reported all over the Middle East. There was a case in 2003 involving the handover of control over Iraqi Airways to a shady outside group, which put up nothing more than "its expertise" in exchange for 51% control of the company. What may appear to be a worthless company with a few tattered airplanes is in fact worth \$3 billion, because in addition to owning valuable landing slots at airports all over Europe, Iraqi Airways owns the land on which most of the civilian airports in Iraq are built. The current Iraqi government does not have the authority to reverse these and other economic measures taken by the Coalition Provisional Authority. Nor will the newly elected parliament have such authority. Such cases in Iraq have caused deep anger against the United States, as well as bitter resistance to pressures for economic liberalization that many people in the region interpret as no more than the looting of their countries' assets.

These privatization measures in Iraq arouse even deeper fears in much of Middle Eastern public opinion regarding the region's primary assets: oil. Here, too, the region's history is all-important. Since commercial quantities of oil were discovered in the Middle East at the turn of the 20th century, and continuing until the 1970s, decisions over pricing, control and ownership over these valuable resources were to all practical intents and purposes in the hands of giant Western oil companies. These companies made the decisions on oil prices. They decided on how much taxes they would pay, or if they would pay taxes at all to local governments. They often decided who would control these local governments. They decided how much oil would be produced. And they decided everything else about oil, including decisions about exploration, conditions of production, labor conditions, and so forth.

During those seven decades, the people of the countries where this wealth was located obtained little benefit from it. Only with the rise of OPEC, the nationalization of the oil industries of the Middle East, and the rapid oil price rises of the 1970s did this situation change. Sadly, it was the oligarchs and the kleptocrats who controlled these countries, and the Western companies that dealt with them, that benefited most from these increased

prices, rather than their peoples. In the light of this history, fears that control over their natural resources will be lost to them, whether to outsiders or to local oligarchs, shape much of the nationalism of the peoples of the Middle East. And events in Iraq only enhance these fears.

If I had more time, I would have talked at some length about the history of attempts to establish democratic, constitutional governments in the Middle East. It is not very well known, but these attempts go back well over a century, and some were successful, including the establishment of constitutions in the Ottoman Empire and Iran in 1876 and 1905 respectively. This was well before constitutions were established in many countries of Southern and Eastern Europe. Portugal for example first had a constitution in 1908. There were parliamentary governments in Egypt, the Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Iran at different times over the first half of the 20th century, and in some of them into the 1960's. In almost every case, these democracies faced severe problems, as new democracies in developing countries do, problems like high illiteracy, poor communications, and entrenched elites that did not want to share their power.

But in almost every case as well, democrats in the Arab world faced the indifference, and sometimes the outright hostility, of the great western democracies – Britain and France, and later the United States. In the Iranian case, as we have seen, a constitutional, democratic government was brought down in 1953 by two of these western democratic powers. Our record, and that of other Western powers, is far from spotless where support for nascent democracies is concerned. Too often, in Iran, Turkey and the Arab countries, strategic and economic advantage were considered more important by Western powers, the United States included, than supporting the democratic aspirations of Middle Eastern peoples. This also is part of the history of the Middle East about which we should be mindful when we address questions of democracy in that region. We claim to be acting in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East in support of democracy (though that was not the original reason President Bush gave for taking us to war). We shall see whether there will be respect for the democratically expressed will of the Iraqi people if that will goes counter to the wishes of the United States, for example if there is a request from a democratically elected parliament for a timetable for a complete U.S. military withdrawal and the removal of all military bases.

Let me conclude by suggesting that for many people in the Middle East, probably a large majority, by invading, occupying and imposing a new regime on Iraq, the United States is seen as following, whether intentionally or not, in the footsteps of the old Western colonial powers. It is doing so, moreover, in a region that within living memory concluded a lengthy struggle to expel hated colonial occupations. We will have to prove to them, and in particular to the Iraqi people, that we are not like the Western powers that came before us. For most Iraqis not already in open rebellion against the occupation, the jury is still very much out on this question. It behooves us to tread very humbly in that part of the world where history is so important, and where proud people, with many millennia of civilization behind them, are very mindful of their own recent history.

We are now well into the third year of an occupation that began with an unprovoked war against a country that in no way threatened the United States. The fact that Iraq

had an undemocratic, brutal, dictatorial regime, one of the worst if not the worst in the Middle East, does not in any way justify that war. There are dozens of such regimes the world over today. At least fifteen thousand, and perhaps as many as one hundred thousand Iraqis have died, the country has been further impoverished, it has been reduced to a state of anarchy, and there is a distinct and growing possibility of a sectarian civil war as a direct result of our invasion and occupation of this country. Archaeological sites that are of unique importance to the heritage of mankind as a whole are being ransacked and looted. Artifacts which, *in situ*, would enable us to reconstruct the evolution of some of the earliest civilizations in human history, are being torn from the places where they have safely rested for several thousand years, and have been scattered to winds, to be hidden in the private collections of greedy, unscrupulous collectors the world over, as a direct result of our intervention there.

We can only guess what the other results of this invasion may be. But one of them is that the United States has set itself on a course that involves American troops trying to impose a regime on Iraq that will accept the establishment of a number of permanent American military bases and a privileged American position regarding the oil riches of Iraq, and that will allow Americans to make the important decisions in that country for the foreseeable future. If the past and the present are any guide to the future, there is little, if any, likelihood that such an effort will succeed in the long term, nor will it be possible to create a force of Iraqis that will act on behalf of the United States to uphold such a new order in Iraq. A clear majority of Iraqis do not want a long-term US presence in their country, something the Bush administration has so far been determined to establish. Whether via an elected government, via a compromise between Iraqi factions, or via the insurgency, this majority will sooner or later express itself. In the meantime, if present casualty rates continue, every month an average of 50 to 75 US soldiers will die and 800 to 900 will be gravely wounded, adding to the nearly 1900 American military personnel killed and perhaps 15,000 gravely wounded, as of the summer of 2005. Several times as many Iraqis monthly will fall as victims.

We must look beyond the mantra of democracy and elections repeated endlessly by the Bush administration, and beyond the seductive power of the self-hypnosis exercised on, in, and by the media. We should examine carefully the recent history of the Middle East to understand the wisdom of trying to fight a land war in Asia (for Iraq is in West Asia) – an expression that should cause alarm bells to ring for those who know the history of U.S. intervention in East Asia – in a country of over 25 million that fought for decades to get foreign bases out of its country only a few decades ago. If American forces leave Iraq rapidly, if they do not attempt to leave behind them permanent U.S. military bases, if the grave and growing dangers of a sectarian civil war there can be avoided, and if a stable Iraqi regime that is reasonably democratic, reasonably tolerant of minorities, and reasonably respectful of the rights of all is established, then the grave perils still inherent in the current situation may be avoided. But if these things do not come about, then we should look to the gloomy precedents of earlier Western interventions that proclaimed high-sounding aims, but ended engendering resistance, bitterness, and divisions, and ultimately helped to create the deeply troubled Middle East in which the United States is so deeply engaged today.